UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, California 90029 (213) 464-5100

June 15, 1982

TO: The U.F.M.C.C. Network of White People Against Racism

Dear Friends:

The Network lives!

We are enclosing for your information an updated mailing list for Network members.

We had a wonderful letter from Bolette Bartholdy, who is using the Network packet and information in Copenhagen, Denmark. She reports that she has had to adapt the material greatly. She says there is much racism in Denmark--often towards African, Asian anddark-skinned southern and Eastern European people who come there for asylum and for jobs. And, there is as much resistance there as here in dealing with racism. She says the lesbian community there is adapting our materials for discussion.

A Network meeting was held at the Eastern Clergy Conference in Edgewater, Maryland in April. Out of 65 conference registrants, almost 50 people attended! That was very exciting. We discussed how to teach other whites about racism and overcoming it; we discussed specific problems at specific Churches. We talked about institutional racism as it gets reflected in budgets, etc. All of us were made aware of the financial needs of the U.F.M.C.C. Department of Race Relations. Money is needed to support the 3rd World Lesbian and Gay Conference, October 22-24, 1982 in Washington, D.C. Also please inform 3rd World people in your area about this important Conference and urge your Church or district to assist with travel expenses. The Great Lakes District voted to give $100 to that Conference. The Mid-Atlantic District has also made pledges, as have individuals. The Board of Elders will be meetingin Dallas June 28-July 2 and will be considering budget.

The Southwest District Conference held two anti-racist workshops which were also well attended. Local Churches are asking for the workshops as well.

We are enclosing workshop outlines and formats, and some articles of interest. If you haven't gotten your copy of Insight Magazine entitled, Black, Christian and Gay, edited by Dr. James Tinney and including several M.C.C. authors, order it soon! It costs $2.00 and you can write to: POB 5110, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

Please let us hear from you--tell us what is happeing in your Church or community--the good news and the bad!

God bless.

Grace & Peace,

Nancy Wilson

Patti Wagner

The Reverend Troy D. Perry, Founder

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SOUTHWEST DISTRICT CONFERENCE, UFMCC, MAY 21-23, 1982

WORKSHOP: "LEARNING TO LABOR TOGETHER"
Facilitators: Patti Wagner, Nancy Wilson

DESCRIPTION: A workshop oriented towards white people concerned with the realities of our personal racism and dealing with it in our daily lives. How do we learn to interact -in our personal lives and in our churches - in healthy affirming ways with people of color? Included ill be information, time for personal sharing, problem solving, and skills for personal growth and change. All people are welcome.

SPONSORSHIP: The UFMCC TASK FORCE ON RACE RELATIONS

SCHEDULE:

Morning Session

Opening Prayer

Instroduction and Ground Rules

EXERCISE: "What is my biggest fear in participating today?"
Say one positive thing about yourself

PERSONAL INVENTORY SHEET

MINI-LECTURE: Definitions, principles for Chrsitians dealing with racism

DISCUSSION

Wrap up and information sharing

Evening Session

Opening Prayer

Introduction and definitions

"CHRISTIANITY AND RACISM" - a review of our roots; searching scripture and tradition and history for a useable past

DISCUSSION AND PROBLEM SOLVING; RESOURCES SHARING

Closing prayer

RACISM: WHAT IS IT? HOW DO WE HANDLE IT?

A WORKSHOP AT DeCOLORES METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
March 13, 1982

Opening Prayer - Patti

GROUND RULES - Nancy

EXERCISE #1 - "What is my biggest fear in participating today?" -Nancy
"Say one positive thing about yourself" - Patti

PERSONAL INVENTORY SHEET - fill out - Patti

FILM STRIP - intro - Yachana

Break

DISCUSSION OF FILM STRIP - Nancy

LUNCH

RE-BIRTH FANTASY - Nancy - sharing

EXERCISE #2: DISCHARGE - groups of three - Patti
(Alternative discharge exercise for people of color simultaneously)

BREAK

EXERCISE #3: "When did you first become aware that you are white?" -Nancy

Share one experience when you did not interrupt a racist remark or event

Share one experience where you interrupted a racist remark or event

EXERCISE #4: THE EXCUSE CLOSET - Patti

EXERCISE #5 : "WHAT DO I DO NOW????" (Personal life and church/organizational life) - Nancy

CLOSING CIRCLE _ AFFIRMATION!!

The Resurgence of The Ku Klux Klan or Why America Needs A Resurgence of The Ku Klux Klan

Why do you observe the splinter in your sister or brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own?

America needs a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan...

...so that we can talk, and write of the "New Klan," the way we have talked and written of the "New South," the "New Negro," the "New Right," the "New Left."

...so that when we speak and write of the "New Klan" we can subtitle it: *White Racism in the 1980's,* thus making us feel fresh and clean inside, convincing ourselves that racism in America in the 1980s manifests itself primarily, if not exclusively, through a few hundred white, largely rural, largely Southern men and women from the blue collar or working class (referred to as "Rednecks" by sophisticated bigots) as they march around a burning cross in a Georgia or Carolina cowpasture.

...so that when we write and speak of THE NEW KLAN: *White Racism in the 1980's* we can delude ourselves into believing that racism exists in *all* ethnic and racial groups and that white racism is just one form among many, rather than acknowledging that powerless groups cannot be racist. They can be prejudiced. They can be bigoted. They can even be racialist. But they cannot be racists. There is a distinction which must be made between racism and bigotry.

...so that we can write an award winning series about them.

...so that the intelligence arms of government can get bigger appropriations to investigate, infiltrate, spy upon, prosecute *white racism in*

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frying pan subscriber WILL CAMPBELL lives on a farm in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, where he sits out back by the fish pond and thinks, whittles, thinks, spits, thinks, and writes, while his corn grows tall and full. His last book was *Brother To A Dragonfly*. His latest book is *The Glad River* and will be reviewed in *frying pan* soon.

America while the real thing continues unabated.

...so that we can get foundation grants to study them —even watch them.

...so that the political tradition can be continued of poor whites and poor blacks hating and suspecting each other, against the day when some young politician might convince both groups that they have the same thing at stake, and that their real enemy is not each other. Such a political movement, we would be told, would certainly have been spawned by communism or some other destructive and alien force of evil, and would certainly be disruptive to the political and economic structures of the nation as we know them.

In short, we Americans need a Jonah to throw overboard, a scapegoat, someone to blame, ridicule and look down our self-righteous noses upon rather than face the fact that we have been a racist nation from the time we stole this land from some dark skinned people, bought and sold other dark skinned people to each other to build it, and fought two global wars to preserve it.

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Having the cutesies about an issue as filled with emotional intensity as the Ku Klux Klan before a *frying pan* audience is not without its hazards. I am part of that audience so I know. And from the beginning I have considered us a sort of club. But this is not intended to be frivolous. A case can be made that each of the things stated play a part in what the national press refers to as the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. Rather than trying to develop those cases, I will try to speak of the myth and reality of the so-called resurgence of the Klan in a conversational manner, pretending that my fellow club members are sitting with me beside the fish pool out back. Carol , John, and I did some of that a few months ago and I will try to reconstruct some of our discussion. You, of course, are free to interrupt with your own objections and exceptions. Unfortunately, I won't be able to hear you.

To discuss the issue at all has pitfalls. It is difficult to keep any clear perspective without appearing to be an apologist. If I can speak with any more passion on the subject than some others it may be because not many years ago I was marked for death by one of the groups we lump in with some others and refer to as "the Klan." Even after the passage of time I am tempted to write dramatically and emotionally of that occasion, to tell you all about it. But never mind all that. It didn't come off. The reason was one telephone call, a call which still evokes both gratitude and uneasiness within me: gratitude that I am still alive; uneasiness because the life-saving warning resulted from the kind of deception which inevitably must accompany intelligence gathering for I have reservations about *any* form of intelligence gathering.

What is "the Klan?" In a sense there is no such thing. There definitely is no such thing as one giant, monolithic organization with a central leadership. "The Klan," as the term is generally used, is an abstraction. It is the pathology of the white ghetto. It exists in dozens, and perhaps hundreds, of small groups scattered about the nation. The splintering and fragmentations have resulted from bitter rivalries more often having to do with territorial rights and leadership than with ideology. It is the same kind of tug-of-war strife one finds in any ghetto.

The common "enemy" is most often, though not always, black people. That is irrational and illogical. Poor whites, it is easy to say, should identify most often with poor blacks for it is the same economic and political forces which keep each group down. But one should not say that without recognizing at the same time that most of the destructive fury of the black ghetto rioters in the 60's was equally misdirected. If the burning and looting had been done in wealthy suburban malls or financial and governmental centers it would at least have been consistent with grievances. But the violent marauding was largely confined to the area of the ghetto itself. And when it was over it was the ghetto itself which lay in smoldering ruins while the malls and statehouses stood in exemption and apparent innocence. Not to understand the parallel between these two misdirections of fury is to not understand rage itself. For rage born of years of frustration, deprivation, and promises unkept, whether black or white, has no conscience, makes few distinctions between friend or

foe. When it explodes the shrapnel is not selective, like a neutron bomb knowing neither Haig or Berrigan.

Of course, it was easy for those of us with a liberal eye to understand the racial eruptions of the sixties. Or at least to believe we understood them. It is not so easy for us to understand why a group of rural, working class whites in Muscle Shoals, Alabama would attack two black ministers with pick ax handles in an Omelet Shoppe restaurant with no more provocation than their presence and color. We can, however, begin to understand it as we begin to understand what ghetto life, black or white, does to people. And as we begin to see that few violent criminal acts ever make any sense. Of course, if we are not morally sickened by that incident we are not worthy of the mark of baptism, the only common bond of our *frying pan* kinship. Being then sickened by the incident because we know it to be brutal, irrational, unjust, and dehumanizing, what is our response? What do we do about it?

Well, beating one another with ax handles is against the law. The easiest response is to say that it is a police and court problem, which is what most of us did. Two of the men were given a year in prison. They were criminals. Yet many, if not most of us who rejoiced at their convictions and incarceration believe that prisons are not the answer to America's crime problem. So we begin to emend the Lord's inaugural address to read: "I have come to proclaim release to captives, unless they hit a fellow human being on the head with an ax handle." Or to cross our fingers when we sing with Joan Baez, "We're gonna raze the prisons to the ground." Our causes sometimes get mixed up and work at cross purposes. I confess to having been one of those whose visera felt that justice had been done in the case of those who hit my brothers with ax handles, but I am haunted by the unconditional wording of the inaugural. There is simply nothing there about ideology. And I am further bothered by the knowledge that it was other of my brothers who did the hitting —brothers for whom Christ also died, and whose release he proclaimed.

Understanding comes even harder when we recall what happened in Greensboro, North Carolina a year ago last October. Five people died there, shot down in the streets like wild beasts. And to date none of them has been convicted of the crimes. The gravity of that incident was minimized by the press's continued use of two negative code words. COMMUNISTS KILLED BY KLANSMEN. What that really means is: "Those who had it coming were killed by those of whom we expect no better." That way we don't have to deal with widows and orphans. Nor with thirteen human beings locked in the Guilford County jail charged with murder. Not even with their wives and parents, some of whom I watched come to the jail on the first visiting day but who were too timid, or uninformed to approach the window and seek permission to visit their sons or husbands.

I admit to having been impatient with the strategy of the Communist Worker's Party which organized the poor in the milltowns of Piedmont North Carolina. As a major slogan they chose: "Death to the Klan." I believe I understand the rationale behind the strategy. Yet, to many poor, uneducated, unemployed rural whites of the area what the slogan meant was: "Death to Rednecks, po' white trash, mamma and pappy, folks like us." Again, we are dealing here with a ghetto mentality. The strategy of the Communist Worker's Party had to do with ideas and ideology, ideas and ideology devised by intelligent, trained, and sophisticated minds. Those who rode into town from surrounding areas that day with guns in the car trunks were not skilled in dealing with ideas and ideology. But they proved that they have other skills, skills which this society has taught them. They are pretty good shots. All of us would agree that constitutional guarantees give the folks of the Communist Worker's Party the right of free speech and assembly, though some of us may question their judgment in exercising those rights in that particular manner and place. Also, if we understand what ghetto life does to people (and the slum areas of Piedmont milltowns are as certainly a ghetto as the most depressed neighborhoods of Harlem) we can grieve with the parents, wives, and children of the thirteen people locked up as certainly as we can grieve with the kin and friends of the slain human beings. In short, we can view it as a tragedy. And one does not take

sides in a tragedy. But that is also too easy. For that is to ignore our own obvious complicity in the incident. Those who did the killing said they did it for us, based on what this society has taught them for many years. "Why," they reasoned, "is it morally right to go to Vietnam and Cambodia to kill somebody I have been told *may* be a Communist and morally wrong to kill those in my home town who scream openly, arrogantly, and defiantly that they *choose* to be Communists?" Perhaps they are not as unskilled in dealing with ideas as we thought. For it is difficult to argue with their logic, especially when we recall that the carnage in Southeast Asia was as constitutionally illegal as the slaughter in Greensboro was in violation of that state's statues. That leaves us with: "Two wrongs don't make a right." But we are forced to say it in the shadow of: "This ye ought to have done, without leaving the other undone."

We also read reports of training camps for guerrilla warfare in Alabama, Texas, and other places, teaching young children to hate, and how to kill the hated. Although extremely isolated and few in number, the existence of even one such center is an outrage to our sensitivities. And should be. Still and yet let us reserve at least a portion of our indignation for the thousands upon tens of thousands of children in elementary and secondary schools throughout the land who are being trained with guns and uniforms how to kill the gooks and slopeheads in the name of nationalism, a *weltanschauung* no more sacred to the Almighty than the myopic vision of the most doctrinaire Klansman.

Is there really a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in America? No, not really. For there cannot be a resurgence of something that never ceased surging. We are a nation of Klansmen, and always have been. (Somehow Klanspersons just doesn't seem appropriate.) We said earlier that a distinction must be made between bigotry and racism. I am not a bigot. Somehow, by exposure, education, conversion, or independent thinking I eased from under that rock. But I am a racist. Racism is not prejudice. Racism includes the demonic structures, forms, and institutions in which we move and breathe and have our being. And if one is white, one has the edge and there is no way to shake it off because no matter how loudly we denounce our whiteness we still have it and can reclaim its privileges any time we please. The skin disease plagues the nation and will not go away with breastbeating about an alleged resurgence of this or that organization.

But of what is being called by the national press a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan there is another factor we should not ignore. (Demons are so clever.) We read some years ago of the murder of a Detroit housewife during the Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery. But only recently did we read that the man who actually pulled the trigger was in the employ of the F.B.I.

And only recently did we learn that one of the chief organizers of the donnybrook in Greensboro that left five people dead was a paid informer for the police.

You have read that Bill Wilkerson heads the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, considered by all Klan watchers to be the most violently oriented of all Klan groups, training women and children in warfare tactics, organizing youth groups in high schools, mass producing hate literature of the most scurrilous nature. Only now do we read that Bill Wilkerson has been an informer for the F.B.I. for five years. All that is to say is that it takes no genius to suspect a second gun syndrome here. An *intentional* Klan? Perhaps so. And for what purpose? Well, you figure it out. But for a starter, might it not be just possible that the larger community has something to gain by having a visible Klan around?

If you can imagine thousands of black people herded behind barbed wire fences, guarded and goaded by a hooded and robed mob of vigilantes burning crosses every midnight you are, in my judgment, paranoid. But if you cannot imagine electronic surveillance of every dissident black or poor voice, recording devices to be used when needed, an extensive file of her/his every activity, legislation already existing and more to come whereby she/he may be prosecuted and neutralized, then you are seriously deluded.

Where does all this leave us? What can we do about it?

See Matthew 7:33ff.

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